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[**Take My Hand** by **Genesis.Malfoy**](#)

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Summary: Mike and El live the best moment of their lives but destiny makes a new move when, in an hospital wing, Eleven practically witness how her heart and her dreams break into a million pieces as she must face her greatest fear: say goodbye to Mike. [N/A: Mileven, angst, romance and tears. Give it a chance, happy ending... probably. R&R]

1. Chapter 1

Stranger Things belongs to The Duffer Brothers and Netflix. I own nothing.

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TAKE MY HAND

xx

December 19th, 1997.

It was amazing how he can put a smile on her face even before she wakes up.

Eleven could feel Mike's lips placing small kisses on her nape, her shoulder and her neck while cuddling her. His arms firmly around her waist and she started moving against him, rubbing her legs with his left leg in the middle and caressing his arms as he smiled against her skin.

"Good morning, beautiful." Mike whispered, his voice deep because he was sleepy or, maybe, because he was very much awake already.

El sighed in delight as she felt their naked bodies so close under the blankets; she bit her lower lip as his kisses on her neck became more intense and desire started pooling down her lower stomach and rising up to every part of her body. Just like last night when they made love three times in a row; one in the shower, two right there on their bed.

"Good morning, cutie pie." she whispered so softly and turned to face him, wrapping one arm on his head so she could pull him down to her lips and kissed him, moaning in pleasure as their tongues found each other instantly. They readjusted their position in bed when they started making out.

She could also feel his desire pressing against her stomach while they

kept deciding who would be on top as they kept on kissing, but then Mike simply placed himself on top of her, kneeling in front of his naked, panting wife as his equipment pointed towards the ceiling with pride and then he ran his hands onto her body, touching every curve as she moaned and moved against him. Eleven was lying on her back, her cheeks already pink as Mike started kissing his way to the south.

El chuckled. "Honey, where do you get your energy from?"

He looked up while kissing her belly button and smiled when she asked that.

"From my hot as fuck wife."

El bit her lip once more; he doesn't use 'dirty talk' often but when he does... *Whoof*, Eleven can literally hear her insides begging for him because she knows what's coming next when Mike says stuff like that and smiles at her the same way he is doing now before licking his lips slowly.

"Oh my God, I love so much, Mike" El panted when his fingers started moving closer and closer to her centre; her body was burning.

"I love you, El." he replied and placed himself in between her legs, holding her thighs on each side of his head. "Let me show you once again just how much."

And for a while, Mike didn't say much else.

x

If Eleven thought she woke up with a big smile then the smile she has now can easily reach both her ears.

After a double love making session that same morning and after Mike made her see the stars twice again, they decided to leave the bed because not only they would set a new record but also because they had a plane to catch; that was why he wasn't taking a shower with her at the moment given that they would get naughty in there too. So while Mike was in charge of breakfast and packing some eggos for their trip, Eleven enjoyed her morning bath, caressing with the soap

and her hands the kisses and touches Mike put on her skin.

When she finished and while dressing up, El packed a couple more stuff and checked that they had everything ready for their flight in two hours. It was 8:30 am, they had time and even if she didn't like waking up so early if she was on vacation, she knew Mike wanted to be there before the bank closes, so he could finish everything and complete his transfer.

Mike's grandfather, the one he loved so much because he encouraged and nurtured the love for science on him since he was a baby, used to live a couple blocks away from their apartment in Cambridge, Massachusetts but he died a couple months after he graduated from college and then his grandmother died only a few days after he finished his master's degree in May; which broke Mike's heart. Eleven met them for the first time on Thanksgiving in 1990 when she went to visit him and spend the holiday with – back then – her boyfriend since she missed him so much because he could only visit her during Christmas and Summer break. So it was during one of her visits that Eleven had the chance to finally meet Karen's parents; both so welcoming, so smart, so charming and so proud of their male grandson for studying in the same college his grandpa went when he was his age. They did everything for Mike; they even bought him a car when he moved there, the car he drove for fifteen long hours for his Christmas break in 1989 so he could be there on time for their fifth anniversary.

His grandparents left on their will that their wealth and properties had to be divided by their only daughter Karen, and their three grandchildren but it was Mike the one who also got the house along with his share and he could do with their house anything he wanted. They said on their will that whether if he chose to live in that house or sell it to buy a new one, they wanted to be there with him one last time and give him his own place so he could start a family next to Janey, as they used to call El.

It had been a beautiful gesture especially since they knew how much they would've love and spoil a great-grandson from Mike's side; of course they loved Nancy's daughter, Jill, but it was well-known and accepted that he was their favourite. So when Mike and Eleven went to visit their house once the furniture had been split with his family

and it was empty, they realized that as much as they both liked the house, he could still feel and see his grandparents in there. He could see his grandma making some tea and his grandpa reading a book and falling asleep, which was nice but also unbelievable sad for him because they weren't there anymore; so when El suggested they should sell the house and buy another one he agreed. They finally found a house only two blocks away from their apartment and arranged with a real state agency to pay for the new house with his grandparent's, then the agency would send them a check with the rest of the money given that his grandparent's house was a lot more expensive than the new one.

That was why Mike wanted to be in Hawkins before the bank closes so Ted could finish all tax papers of his son's new house, he also worked with an Inheritance lawyer who made all the paper work for the purchase, given that Karen was the original heir of the house as she was the only child and had to step aside for her son to claim it. It was a bit of a mess but thank God Ted knew what he was doing and knew who he could trust with his son's future home. Mike and El were very thankful because even if Ted may seem dull and tired, when business and money are involved he became a tiger.

Eleven smiled; she really hopes that she and Mike can become pregnant and take a baby to the new house so Albert and Theresa can see from heaven the great-grandson they didn't get to spoil and love. She truly hopes that those passionate nights, days and showers would soon bring a new life but meanwhile, they'll keep trying.

But then, as she started to comb her hair, Eleven frowned when she heard Mike... arguing? He hardly ever argues with people and less of all during his Christmas vacations since he loves that time of the year and it was even weirder for him so fight with anyone so early. She got dressed with a pair of jeans and a sweater and walked towards their living room to see Mike arguing with a huge man about...

"What is this *orange* couch doing in our living room?" asked Eleven as soon as she saw a big, puffy and awfully orange couch wrapped in plastic foil.

Mike turned to look at her. "I'm sorry baby, that's exactly what I'm trying to figure."

"Is this Mrs. Wheezer?" asked the man who was almost as tall as Hopper and around fifty pounds overweight, pointing at her with a paper sheet. There was another guy behind him but he was just chewing gum.

"Wheeler." both Mike and El said in unison and also glared at the man.

"Right, well I need your signature here Mr. and Mrs. Wheeker."

Both of them frowned; Mike shook his head and politely but firmly pushed the notepad and refused to sign it. Eleven spoke again still confused.

"What is going on and why is an orange couch in our living room? We didn't order a couch of this colour."

Mike added his voice to his wife's. "That's what I've been trying to tell him, baby. I was finishing breakfast when these gentlemen rang our doorbell and the second I answer the door they get inside with the couch, no questions ask." he explained but then the employee from Sweet Environments interrupted.

"Well, I have the purchase of a couch that must be delivered in here to the Whoolers, an orange couch." the man said, pointing at the receipt. "And we have this address and this apartment."

Mike took the notepad the man had been trying to get him to sign and both he and El read it. Not only their last name was unreadable but they didn't respect a single thing of what they orderer. Mike and Eleven did go to the furniture's store and bought a couch for the new house; they put the address of the new house and the delivery day which would be three weeks later, after they get back from their vacations and in the available colours, they had a burgundy leather couch and an orange wool couch; El drew an X next to the burgundy one. At the bottom they add their credit card data, their phone number, current address and apartment, but after that everything was very clear.

"But my wife pointed out which couch do we want and it wasn't this one, see?" Mike showed to the man which option she chose. "And

here we wrote the address and the date in which the couch should have been deliver, which isn't here or today."

The man took the notepad again and read it. "Oh yeah, guess you're right. But still the lady here pointed with an X this one and we take the unmarked option as the one customers want. Didn't anyone tell you that?"

The young couple was in shock; they couldn't believe just how stupid that man really was.

"Well, you have until Monday to ask for a refund of your money or the couch you ordered. After that, no one will help you."

Mike gasped. "We can't go today, we are about to take a plane and go on vacations in less than two hours! You were the one who made this mistake; you should take this one back!"

When Mike said that, neither him or El couldn't believe it but both delivery men started laughing as loud as they could.

"Oh no, sorry dude but this ain't my problem anymore. You can go to the store if you want but I get pay to bring a couch and I did. Have a nice day." he simply said as he kept laughing and left the apartment, leaving the young couple engrossed and angry.

They looked at each other in shock.

"Can you believe that moron?" asked Mike pointing at the closed door and taking the receipt attached to the couch.

El shook her head. "Damn it! We have an orange couch, Mike. I hate this colour!" El complained looking at the furniture and curling her nose in disgust.

He went to their phone and begun calling the number in the receipt. He was clearly angry.

"I know, baby, I know. I'll have a word with the manager and complain about these employees he has. They mocked us, can you believe it?"

El went next to her husband and hung up the phone before someone answers and then cupped his face in her hands, caressing his freckles with her thumbs. He had no problem with the orange colour, but he knew she hated it and was angry because of how disrespectful they were towards her and her wishes.

She wanted to smile. Mike is just so sweet, so considerate.

"Honey, relax. We have things to do right now; you still have to shower and we should have our breakfast already and go to the airport. If you call now they'll toy with you and have you waiting for God knows how long only to offer no real solution, only a headache." she reason, she was right. "When we get back we'll go to the store and see what we can do. If they don't take any responsibility, we'll simply have it refurnish and won't buy anything else in there."

Mike thought about what she just said and then nodded. El was right and it was just a couch, besides if she can stand it until they have it refurnish then it was fine. Still, the way that man kept saying their last name as if he didn't care, the way they laughed at them and the way those men looked at El (with lust, as if she was a piece of meat), didn't go unnoticed for Mike so, as soon as they get back from Hawkins, he was going to send a complaint to the central office.

He sighed. "You're right, baby. I won't let those two idiots spoil our Christmas break." he settled for a compromise and then smiled, leaned and kissed her softly on the lips. She kissed him back and helped him relax; always showing him his centre, always finding a solution to any problem. "I already packed some eggos for our trip, baby. Breakfast is ready; I'll go take a shower."

El smiled against his lips, happy that Mike calmed down. Their morning went back into being the perfect one it was a couple minutes ago.

"Awesome, but breakfast together first and shower later." ordered El and had him sit down where eggs, fruits, eggos, plates and cups and syrup were waiting for them and then took the coffeepot. "Would you like some coffee, Mr. Whimper?"

Mike chuckled at her antics and felt how the unpleasant moment they

experienced minutes ago went flying away, defeated by the sweetness of the woman he married. He played along.

"Well thank you, Mrs. Wheezer."

They laughed outright this time as El poured coffee on both hers and Mike's mug and had a nice big breakfast together before Mike went to take a shower and then they left the apartment with their suitcases to the airport.

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"Hey, over here!"

It was 11 am and Mike and Eleven picked their luggage at the airport after their flight, Mike carrying them with a trolley when they noticed Hopper was waiting for them with his Police uniform and waving at them. He had a few more grey hairs on his moustache and his hair line since the last time they saw him and a big smile when they looked at him. Mike still felt a little scared that the man tells him something if he sees him and El kissing or snuggling but then he would remind himself that she was now his wife and, unlike their teenage years, Hopper shouldn't get mad at him if he kisses her.

"Dad!" yelled Eleven and ran towards her father, her hair waving behind her and then jumped in his arms; he lifted her in the air with ease and she laughed and squealed given that he was so much stronger than her.

Hopper had the biggest smile. "Hey kiddo! This dumb old man sure missed his little girl!"

El laughed in his arms; she may have 26 years old but she would always be his little girl.

"Hi Chief." said Mike with a smile when Hopper let El go and they shook hands, the older man patted him on the back playfully feeling so happy to see them again.

They called each other often, always keeping in touch. The young couple had been married for four years (they got married still very young if you ask him but it wasn't a mistake or anything), but still

the Chief of Police felt like an eternity every single day without the kids, boy included. He still remembered how unimaginable happy his daughter looked when one morning she came back home from her date with Mike and, while having breakfast, her engagement ring caught both his and Joyce's attention leaving them in shock until his wife started squealing in excitement along with her, yelling and crying because Eleven was finally engaged to Mike. The engagement itself was really short and he barely had time to process that his little one was about to get marry when the big day came along and he found himself walking down the aisle with her, tears in his eyes and then El moved to Massachusetts with her brand new husband in what it felt like a blink of an eye for James Hopper.

Anyway, they were back in town and they were going to spend the holidays with their families for almost twenty days. Karen and Ted were hosting a dinner at night for both families since their children were staying ten days at the Wheeler's and ten days at the Hopper/Byers residence so no one gets jealous. He even played 'rock, paper, scissors' against Karen to decide who gets to pick them up; he won and cheered although he would never admit it.

"How was the flight, kids?" asked the older man as he drove from Indianapolis airport back to Hawkins; El was sitting next to him and Mike on the back seat with some of their luggage behind the fence between front and back seats.

"It was good, Chief, although we thought we'd lose our flight." said Mike while checking his watch. Luckily he had time.

El noticed how he was anxious and nervous and smiled at him. "Honey, relax. Your father probably has everything ready and we still have like four hours before the bank closes."

"I know baby, but I don't know how long my mother will want me to stay before she can release me, giving that we haven't seen each other since..."

Mike went silence and Eleven understood. He hadn't seen his mother since his grandmother's funeral and she knows, everybody knows just how much he loved his grandparents. Eleven wished there was no fence between them so she could hold his hand.

Hopper decided to speak. "Joyce and I are very sorry we couldn't be there, Mike." the man apologized, locking eyes with his son-in-law from the rear-view mirror. "I'm very sorry for your loss, kid. We all know how much you loved them and how much they loved you. I'm sure they are very proud of you. We all are."

His words took Mike by surprise; even if they got along and even when that tension they had with each other when he and El were teens was long gone, Hopper wasn't a warm man, it wasn't his nature and that was okay. He is not a very affectionate man and he definitely isn't a man that would hug him or anything; his demonstrations of love towards his son-in-law came as awkward jokes and sly comments, but that was it.

Still Mike appreciated the gesture.

"It's okay, Chief, really. Thank you."

Both men smiled at each other and Hopper only nodded, meanwhile Eleven had tears in her eyes. She couldn't understand why she had tears in the first place. Sure, she knew Mike missed Albert and Theresa and even when she felt touched by how honest and kind her father talked to her husband, she didn't know why she was so emotional. It felt like if the conversation had been twice as sad and beautiful; maybe she was just nostalgic and happy. Maybe the smell of the trees and the colours around her as they entered Hawkins again gave her butterflies.

Maybe she was happy to be back.

"So, El told me you already covered the initial payment of the new house." said Hopper since he felt a bit uncomfortable with the gloomy silence that fell upon them.

The young couple appreciated what he did: they were back in town to enjoy and spend a happy time with their families and their friends. It wasn't the time to be upset; it was time to laugh and celebrate.

"Yeah, it's only three blocks away from our apartment and two blocks away from Will and Florian's." Mike said, feeling much more comfortable than he felt seconds ago.

El nodded. "It's really pretty, dad. It has front and back yard and trees, flowers. It smells really good."

"Great! Next summer we can go visit and have a nice barbecue for the 4th of July." the Chief already had plans for his upcoming vacations. "What about work, Mike? Is it close or you guys will take shifts with the car?"

"Oh no, Chief. El will keep driving the Corsa to work and I have my bike if I don't feel like walking to the lab. Its only five blocks total but sometimes I wanna use it. You know, for old time's sake."

"Oh my God, Mike! I forgot to give our keys to the neighbours!" El practically shouted as she turned around to her husband, panic written all over her face.

Hopper jumped on his seat and almost run over the Wheeler's mailbox, then huffed. "Jesus, kid! You almost give me a heart attack."

El apologized and Mike appeased her.

"It's okay, El, I already gave the keys to the twins. They promised they won't use the car and even offered to clean it before we get home. Nice, right?"

"Oh, my... Thanks honey." El sighed in relief. Seriously, what was wrong with her? Why was she so jumpy and emotional all of the sudden?

"What twins?" asked Hopper as they parked and held their suitcases with the boy's help as they approached the Wheeler's front door.

"Oh, a lady and her fourteen year old twin boys moved to the apartment next door. She is recently divorced and these two kids always offer to carry people's bags, wash the rest of the neighbours cars, babysit if someone needs it so they can help their mom with the rent. They are so sweet, so polite." explained El. They've always been nice to her.

"Yeah, they are really cool. They insisted to keep an eye on our apartment and the car. They are new at their school and had troubles with math but since they couldn't afford a private tutor, I volunteered

and helped them until they catch up, no charge. They wanted to repay us, but we are going to give them some money anyway, they don't need to pay me back, it was my pleasure."

El agreed. "They are sweet boys."

Hopper nodded. "That's very nice of you, kid."

It doesn't matter that Mike is an engineer and that he has a master degree in... In science stuff – he always forgets what he does –, to him he would always be 'kid'.

But unfortunately for Mike they were interrupted when the front door opened and Karen ran towards them, arms opened and sobbing in happiness to welcome the young couple.

Five minuets later, Karen still had Mike's face in her hands kissing his nose, his forehead, his cheeks in the most embarrassing way while crying and squealing every time she remembered how long it had been since they saw each other and how much she missed her baby boy.

Eleven and Hopper were doing their best at holding back their snickers and Mike kept trying to look at the hour in his watch but couldn't since his mother's head was on the way.

"Mom, please stop!" begged the young man, desperately wanting to wash his face and remove the lip-gloss she left with every kiss. "You act like if we haven't seen each other since last year!"

Karen stopped for a moment, cupping his face with both hands and caressing her son's cheekbones with her thumbs. She smiled at him, looking at the little boy he used to be when he came home with scraped knees, wanting mommy's care and kisses.

"I know, sweetie but last time..."

Last time they saw each other at Theresa's funeral. Mike sighed, gave his mother an understanding smile and kissed her cheek. She let him go and focused on Eleven next, filling her with the same amount of kisses.

"It's so good to have you back, kids. Thank God you came home safe."

The four of them went inside after El got her fair share of kisses and they left the luggage on the living room since Mike wanted to keep moving before unpacking or doing anything else. He just needed to complete all the paper work and that would be all.

"You guys may want to recover because when Joyce sees you, she's gonna give each other as many kisses as Karen did." joked Hopper, although it was no joke.

Mike and Eleven whined but Karen came back with lemonade and homemade cookies for all.

El heard her stomach growl. She had a big breakfast only a couple hours ago but still she was super hungry, yet Karen's cookies were delicious so she didn't worry.

"I'm sorry I can't sit now, mom. I need to get going and meet dad." he said as he washed his face on the sink. He didn't think it was appropriate to handle such important procedure with pink lipstick all over his face. "Do you have the papers ready?"

She nodded and smiled at him. "Don't worry, sweetie, your father took everything with him this morning. He must be waiting for you."

Ted is a certified public accountant and works at Hawkins Bank. He is also friend with this inheritance tax attorney and they worked together to have everything ready for Mike given that since Karen was the direct heir of her parents wealth, they had to perform a succession for her to pass the house to Mike, as it was her parents last wish. After that Mike would sign a check with the rest of the payment for the new house and have Ted put on a bank account the remaining amount of money from the sale of the house his grandparents left him, as it was arranged with the real state, given that the new house isn't as expensive as the one he received on their will.

"Thanks mom, really."

Karen made a gesture with her hands as if it wasn't a big deal and smiled. Truth was that she would have given Mike the house anyway.

Nancy was an apartment person and happily living in Brooklyn with Jonathan and her daughter; Holly would probably receive their house and Mike is the only one living in Cambridge. Besides he deserved it, he had always been closer to her parents than herself or her daughters.

"Hey kid, if you want I can take you there. I'm heading up to the Station anyway."

The young man agreed, even if everything was almost ready he still felt a little nervous to drive her mother's car. He was very anxious and happy since he will finally complete the purchase of the house he'd share with the love of his life.

"Thanks Chief." said Mike and gave his mother a hug, and then he leaned to Eleven who was already eating cookies and drinking lemonade. He kissed her softly on the lips. "I'll be right back, baby. Do me a favour, would you? If my mother wants to see baby pictures or even plan my birthday, stop her. I beg you."

El smiled and kissed him, adoration shining in her eyes. "Take care, honey and about the other thing... Tsk, sorry, can't do. We already planned something over the phone."

Mike whined when he realized that his wife and his mother had already planned some big celebration for his 26th birthday in four days. When he walked out he heard their laughter behind him and Hopper's next to him, feeling sorry for the boy.

xx

When he got to the bank, his father was already waiting for him at the entrance and gave him a big hug. Mike was a little taken back by this gesture but he didn't complain. Ted had never been the affectionate kind, more like the sleepy kind of father but maybe it was that Mike lived in another state or he was getting old, who knows. He wasn't affectionate with his parents either; yes he loves them but Mike has never shown his feelings as open as he does with Eleven. Yet he was thankful his dad was waiting for him because it would have been a little hard to find his office within the new building.

This new building was once an old wood deposit which was modified in levels so the bureaus were upstairs and split in levels with this 'U' shape facing the entrance. The fortified glass roof allowed natural light to illuminate the bank and this huge crystal chandelier in the middle which fell from ceiling to a couple feet above a big, beautiful water fountain, giving an amazing view to the clients since the sunlight reflected from the glass ceiling went through the crystals from the gigantic lamp and a set of rainbows fell in the dancing water from the fountain. It looked like a fairytale.

On the ground floor Mike found on his right different bank employees behind their desks, bank tellers and automatic tellers on his left; on the opposite side of the entrance and behind the fountain he saw the vault, along with several securities members and clients walking around and sitting, waiting for their turn. In each side of the bank there were two wooden stairs leading to both levels above him. The first level lead up to different offices with public accountants (like his father), tax attorneys and different financial consultants; and in the second level were the management department, human resources and of course, the bank President's office, talking with someone and keeping an eye on the rest of the bank from his level.

Hawkins was changing he could tell; the bank itself was the proof of how this small town wanted to grow and expand and he thought it was a good idea, although he hoped it wouldn't lose its soul. But he'd think about it later, meanwhile he had other things to do and follow his father to his office were the attorney was waiting for them. Last thing he saw before going up the stairs was the armoured car and security splitting to guard the transported values as to guard the vault as well.

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"It feels so weird coming back to the basement and see a regular basement." said El as she and Karen came back to the kitchen with the laundry basket. They had taken their suitcases to Mike's old room and then El helped her mother-in-law with some chores while they talked about Mike's birthday/Christmas party/congratulations for your master's degree celebration they have been planning for weeks.

She was really excited to see the party all back together again. Will

was coming around 8 pm since Florian had things to do until the afternoon. They have been together for the last five years and were staying at his house for Christmas and then they'll visit Flo's parents in Indianapolis for the New Year week. Will went to Northwestern and graduated in Psychology. He met Florian when he and Mike travelled fifteen hours from Massachusetts to Hawkins on their first Christmas break in 1989. Back then they became friends and wrote each other frequently until they realized they had fallen in love and when they graduated, Will moved to Cambridge with his boyfriend.

Dustin also lived in Cambridge and was flying to Indiana on the next day with his wife Jennifer and his baby girl for everyone to meet her. Will, Florian, Mike and El already met her since they all lived close. Dustin graduated in Harvard Medical School and he and Mike got a lot closer during the college years given than they saw each other often, since Mike went to MIT and got his master's degree in Biomedical Engineering; Jennifer Hayes – now Henderson – moved to Massachusetts as well when she finished college and she and Dustin got married and they recently welcomed a beautiful baby girl. But baby Henderson had an aunt and an uncle yet to meet.

Lucas and Max have been married for the last two years and they lived in Hawkins. They were the only ones who decided to stay there. Lucas was practically everyone's lawyer in Hawkins, a fact that made Mr. and Mrs Sinclair unimaginable proud. He went to Yale Law School and when he finished college, he and Max had a big crisis. Max, who went to the Police Academy and was currently working with Hopper, told her boyfriend that she wanted to spend the rest of her life in Hawkins. She had lived in California, she knew how a big city was and it wasn't until she spent those years in this small town that she realized she belonged to a quite place like this but she didn't want to hold him back. She knew how attractive big cities could be and since Lucas loved Connecticut he should get back there and to his own life. That crisis ended up after Lucas came to Hawkins a few months later, knocked her door in the middle of the night and kneeled in front of her under the pouring rain with a ring in hand, saying that he could be a lawyer anywhere but the only way he could be himself was if she accepted marrying him.

That was the day when Max cried and she whispered a soft 'yes' and

kissed her fiancée under the rain as if they were some cheesy characters from those romantic movies her mother loves and she hates. She didn't care, because it was Lucas, the one who had to put up with her temper since so long, the one who loved her enough to make a fool of himself and catch a cold after he stood under the rain during a cold November night.

x

"Are you kids excited to have all your friends together again?" asked Karen as she folded Holly's shirts.

El nodded. "Oh yes, even if we live really close with each other, we really miss Lucas and Max. They are going to meet Dusty's daughter for the first time, she is beautiful. She looks just like Jennifer but Dustin believes she's gonna have his curls."

"Yeah, Mrs. Henderson showed me a picture the other day. What did they name her?"

"Pamela Iris Henderson. I think is a gorgeous name."

"It is." agreed Karen and then looked at El, then back at the clothes, then back at her. "Jane darling, I know it's not any of my business but I was wondering if you and Mike... You know."

Eleven instantly knew what she was trying to ask and smiled at her, nodding. "We are trying, Karen. It was hard at first getting my period every month but doctor said it's normal since I've been taking the pill for a while, but yes, we are trying."

Even if she was the one who asked, Karen felt both shocked and overwhelmed and excited, all at once and hugged her daughter-in-law, almost weeping at thought of having a grandchild from Mike and Jane.

"Oh my God, Jane! I hope you two get pregnant soon. You know since Nancy gave us Jilly we've been dreaming on the day we may get a grandson from you two so, ugh! I'm so happy!" said the woman with tears in her eyes. "Can you imagine? Of course I would love another girl but I keep thinking how cute it would be if you kids have

a baby boy with my son's freckles on a chubby, round face."

Eleven practically jumped and wept as well, covering her heart with both hands. "Oh no, now you made me so much more excited than I already am! If we have a baby with Mike's freckles I'm gonna lose my mind."

"This is getting so real now, oh wow!" said Karen while she daydreamed about her future grandkid. Would the baby come next year, the year after? Would he or she have curls, dark hair and beautiful freckles or honey eyes and brown hair? Would he or she be a mixture of both? "Jane, how about we get these clothes to Holly's room and then we have some tea while breaking my son's rules and see his baby pictures?"

El beamed at her and nodded, taking the laundry basket and heading upstairs. She just loved those pictures.

"Where's Holly?"

"Oh she had a sleep over last night; she'll be back by dinner probably."

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"Thanks for all your help, dad." said Mike thanking his dad with a hug and the attorney with a hand shake and a big smile.

Finally everything was done, the check has been send and the papers signed. He could finally go back to Eleven – who, by the way, was probably watching his baby pictures with his mother – and tell her they officially owned the new house. He couldn't wait.

It was so much more than having a house because, even if they both loved their apartment and it would always be their first home as husband and wife, the fact that they now owned a house was knowing they will grow old in it, that they will make a life there. That house would be the home that'd watch the years go by and find them every day a little more in love. It'd be the house where they would celebrate birthdays, Christmas; where Eleven would wake him up with a big breakfast every anniversary and where Mike would

come home with a box of chocolates and flowers every Valentine's Day. The house that'd witness their bickering just like any other couple, but that will also witness their hot and passionate reconciliations.

It would be the house were they'd conceive and, one day, walk in with a tiny newborn baby in Eleven's arms and tears in their eyes. The house where Mike and El would witness how their kids will learn how to walk, to speak, and where they'd mark on a wall next to fridge how much these kids grew from the previous year and where they'll leave money under their pillows every time they'd lose their baby teeth. The house where Mike would help their children with school stuff and where Eleven would take care of them every time they get sick.

The house that would witness their love for the rest of their lives; a love story which began many years ago and with many, many more years to come.

Mike waved his dad goodbye and walked down the stairs with a big smile, feeling confident that the best part of his life was coming; but he must have been distracted with his plans and his immeasurable happiness that he didn't notice the look on some of the employees still working on the bank that pretended to be painting some walls or replacing a couple light bulbs. And Mike also didn't notice how these employees exchanged a look with other guards near the volt and near the truck.

Not until it was too late.

It felt like a second and probably was only a moment what it took for a man to point a gun at the driver's head in the values truck outside and another man who pretended was a painter to shoot a real guard at the entrance while a couple fake guards pointed their guns at the cashiers of the bank and made everyone lie on the floor as they robbed Hawkins Bank.

But Mike, who believed in doing the right thing and who always wanted to help a person in need, saw as an innocent old, deaf man didn't pay attention to what was happening around him was about to be shot in the head by one of the criminals and he jumped to save

that poor old grandpa at the same time three police men made their presence know, yelled at the robbers and then, all hell broke loose.

x

Little did Karen and Eleven know what happened in the bank as they kept going from album to album, both now seeing a picture of Mike when he was four and dressed as a frog one Halloween and Karen told El a lot of pretty stories that melted their heart and how she had to go with him holding his hand the entire day because he was scared of the people wearing scary masks.

"It must be a thing he has. When we walk together wherever we go he always holds my hand too. I mean is common for every couple but I think that's what he likes the most." El said. "Well, among other things."

They had close relationship so it was natural for Karen to hear those things from her daughter-in-law. It was so cute and so rare; his son hardly ever shared things from his personal life since he was ten years old and then he meets this wonderful girl who is as open as a book. She loves her, she is like another daughter for her.

"He always liked to hold hands until he got older; I never had to tell him twice. I remember when Nancy and Holly were little they used to get me on my nerves every time we had to cross the street and never wanted to hold my hand, but Mike was so different. Whenever I looked down, his tiny hand was up. Ever since the moment he tried to give his first step, looking up to me with that big smile as if saying 'look mommy'..." the woman felt a bit emotional remembering those beautiful days and knowing that in the future she might see that again in a grandson or another granddaughter from Mike and El, (or Jane), since she didn't know her real identity.

"See, this one is from the day after he was born. Talking about holding hands, did I ever mention...?"

But Karen stopped when she noticed a strange look on the girl next to her. Her gaze dark, her face pale, sweating and cold when she tried to call her but got no answer before she would ran to sink and start gagging.

As for Eleven, she didn't know what was happening.

Suddenly when they were talking about Mike wearing a frog costume when he was four, she felt a knot in her stomach pulling up and down as the air became heavy, as if a dark smoke entered the living room and Karen voice became distorted by the second and when she touched her face El ran to the sink, wanting to puke her guts out for no reason.

"Sweetie, oh my God, are you okay? I'll get you some cool water, hold on." said Karen who was now standing besides her in the sink, rubbing her back and El realized she felt dizzy, trying her best not to pass out.

What was happening? Why did she feel so weak, so angry all of the sudden and so, so sad?

She definitely didn't know what was happening and couldn't figure out why it felt like if a huge black hole opened beneath her feet, trying to suck her in or why her throat hurt as if she wanted to cry harder than she ever did as if her heart had just broken beyond repair.

Then as Karen gave her a nice cool glass of water with ice and told her to sit down, the phone rang in the Wheeler's house and not only could Eleven hear Ted's voice from the other side of the line and read the expressions on Karen's face, but she could also hear and practically see the ambulances coming and going, the police vehicles going fast to the centre and a couple seconds later, as the woman in front of her started crying while holding that phone as if her life depended on it; Eleven heard the siren and saw the red light from the Police cherry before it actually parked in the drive way of the Wheeler's house.

The sadness in Max's eyes as she rushed to her in a hug that should have been happy since they didn't see each other for months, was what made El blink twice and realization washed over her making her feel like she was drowning and dying all at once. She heard the glass slipped through her fingers and broke into a million pieces along with all of her dreams and every bit of her heart.

At 7 pm 5WIYZ begun its broadcast with the special report of an attempter robbery that took five lives that same morning in the new building of Hawkins Bank and a reporter interviewed an old man who could only express his gratitude and respect to the family of a young man who saved his life but then fell wounded and cold next to the big fountain in the ground floor.

oOoOoOoOoOo

Hi everyone and welcome to my new story! I'm very excited with this one because I had it in mind since December 2017 but I've wanted to set their love story first so this one could surprise you.

I have no idea how many chapters will this be but I think six. What I do know is that this will have all the angst and all the romance. If you feel you want something or want to ask me something, or scold me if I'm taking too long, you can always dm me on my instagram celes_genesis.

I won't be able to post often but I will do my best giving that I started taking a course, (and I have other responsibilities as well as you guys). But I will try my best to post chapters here and in my one-shot series WEIRD STUFF. Keep in mind that I have to write it in Spanish and then do this translation so it takes double the effort so pleaseeeeeeee leave a comment.

Given the time I dedicate to you guys I only expect a couple words. All authors do, so please if you read my stories or anyone's stories please leave a comment because it means the world to us.

Shout-out to the wonderful disneyprincess315 and phieillydinya; both amazing authors, so talented and so, so nice. Go read their stories.

Anyway, hope you guys enjoyed this chapter, hope you guys leave a comment, and I hope we can all get the freaking trailer this week.

See you next chapter!

2. Chapter 2

[A/N: Hello guys, just want to say something important before we get into this chapter. Since season 3 changed sooo many things, from now on all my stories from **WEIRD STUFF** and this one become AU. What does it mean? Well I'll leave to you guys to think these stories take place at a) an alternative universe; b) post season 2, pre season 3; or c) post season 3 but pretending that no one moved from Hawkins and Hopper never 'died' – basically they went back to the cabin and that's it. You guys choose what you want to believe from now on.

I gave this a lot of thought and I presented this on my instagram for people to vote because I didn't know what to do and this decision was the result of many, many days wondering how to continue given that, as you know, I have a list for the next chapters of **WEIRD STUFF** series and those stories have been imagined since a long time ago. Also because I want to keep writing fluffy/happy/funny stories because I think we all need that and, even if this story **TAKE MY HAND** is sad – and I mean really sad – I don't want to write angst aside from this one until I'm done with the *Weird Stuff* list.

When I'm done writing all that I mentioned, I'll start with canon post season 3 but at the moment we'll continue like this. I hope you guys keep reading and supporting my art. Thank you.

Now, enjoy.]

Stranger Things belongs to The Duffer Brothers and Netflix. I own nothing.

oOoOoOoOoOo

TAKE MY HAND

Ch. II

Suddenly a cloth of harrowing fantasy settled onto her as her mind remained numb, not quite understanding the things she heard but, at the same time, she could understand every word coming out of Max's mouth; she understood but she didn't want to.

El wanted to think her friend was wrong; that between the events of the bank robbery she kept telling her about with muffled voice and Karen looking for her purse and car keys in the back of the room, maybe they made a mistake and Mike ended up unharmed. Maybe he was done with everything for what he went to the bank, maybe he was coming home and stopped on the way to buy a wine bottle for dinner and he'd be back soon, walking through the door with a bag of groceries telling them that something happened right after he left.

Karen would hug him, happy and relieved. Max would make a joke about his great luck and then leave to help her work colleagues and he would hug Eleven because he'd knew she would have believed the same as everyone else did.

It'd be a moment when El would cry out of fear and also happiness because it'd all be just a false alarm; she'd take a deep breath in the arms of the man she loves and Mike would stroke her hair, kiss her forehead, the tip of her nose and then her lips before whispering *"Don't worry, beautiful, I'm here."*

But that never happened.

Instead Karen came to her wiping the tears out of her eyes and taking her hand, walking to the car as she whispered they should get going and her voice was so peaceful and horribly resigned. Max drove behind them too and Eleven would never forget the look on her friend's eyes; her nose so pink, her bright eyes so red since she wanted to remain calm and professional but couldn't hide her sadness because Mike was also her friend and because she knew how much pain was hovering over El.

In a blink of an eye the sky went covered by thick clouds, hiding the blue from the noon with a layer of gray. Snow-filled clouds that would bring joy to children, remembering them that Christmas was

only a couple days ahead but then, for Eleven, that sky or the holydays coming or the people around them meant nothing. It was like if she couldn't react, as if the pain had grown so strong it passed any suffering and she couldn't feel anything, not even the car moving, the noise from the streets nor the howling from Max's patrol car; yet when they parked and Eleven noticed the building in front of her and the EMERGENCY sign on top of the door she opened her eyes again, blinked three times and squeezed Karen's hand as reality hit her hard.

Every step she made, every face passing by on that emergency hallway, every voice calling for them and asking if they needed any help, every nurse she bumped into, every litter, every sick person, every second as they turned left and right on the hospital wing and she could smell the characteristically scent of medicines, iodine, new lives beginning and death; all of that made Eleven fully aware of the reality they were into, of what happened.

Desperation clear in her eyes, her frown deep and her muscles tensed as they practically ran trying to find a familiar face. Karen asked her to slow down, to be calmed because they had to ask someone where they were and where they should be going but Eleven ignored her because she knew already. El just *knew*.

She didn't need to ask anyone because her senses were on alert, because she was lucky to count with something special guiding her steps and telling her where she should go and that wasn't her powers; it wasn't the bleeding in her nose she hasn't experience since they were kids, it wasn't the special abilities of which Karen knew nothing about. No, it was something else, what guided Eleven was something invisible and, at the same time, it was known for every living thing on that planet: it was their love. The love she feels for Mike, the weak and paused beating of his heart coming closer to her with every step she made; the smell of his skin she knew so well after many nights she spent on top and under him touching her own, kissing her during intimacy as his voice filled her ears with deep passion and his lips marked her skin. It was their love what called for her because no one knew her as well as the feeling they created, like a magnet.

"Dad!" El yelled when they reach a white hallway and found Hopper and Ted Wheeler sitting near a closed big white door.

The Chief of Police and her father in law – who was resting his head in his hands, clearly upset – looked up to both woman and each one fell into their arms, both desperate to give and receive support.

"I'm here, kid, I'm here." whispered the Chief when El hugged him and buried her face on his chest. The man who gave her a family and only then El realized she started crying desperately, scared to death to even ask what happened.

Fortunately Karen found her voice first even when she felt as broken as El did. She hugged Ted and when they pulled apart, only then, Eleven noticed blood on the man's shirt, blood she knew wasn't his.

"Oh no..." she gasped, her voice muffled as she covered her mouth in an attempt to stop the scream crawling its way through her heart. Her eyes so big filled with a storm of endless tears as she shook her head not wanting to accept just how injured Mike was but Hopper grabbed her shoulders and shook her a little bit.

"He is alive. He is alive, you hear me?" he said, his voice severe as he forced his daughter to look at him in the eye and find her way back from the dark clouds hovering her own mind. He would apologize later for being rude but right now he needs her to pay attention. Jim patted her shoulders when her crying ceased. "He is in surgery right now."

Saying that the following hours were a torture is an understatement.

x

It was getting dark really fast that day. It was five o'clock and since it was winter the clouds she saw earlier covered all remaining sun in what it felt like a second, the night falling in a heartbeat but also every hour they kept waiting felt like an eternity, yet she wouldn't leave. Ted had to get back to the house since Holly was coming back from her sleepover and he had to make plans for her to stay at some of her friend's house and be taken care of since it was her brother who's in the hospital and also because Karen asked him to change; seeing the blood on his shirt was too much. Eleven was surprised to see Ted being so active and so 'awake' all of the sudden but then she imagined it wasn't a choice; Karen is Mike's mother and Eleven knows

the storm of fears she must have because she feels the same way, after all no one loves Mike as much as they do.

Joyce showed up at the hospital only a couple minutes after Ted left. She came in looking as worried as she imagined and the woman hugged Eleven because she knew what she was going through. Mrs. Byers, (Mrs. Hopper actually, Joyce, whatever she might have call her before) it all resumes to 'mom' as she calls her now; a mother of the heart for her and she cried again in her arms.

"Hi mom." was all Eleven could say. It's been years since she called her like that for the first time and she knew that such small word had the power to touch the woman deeply because it gives her the strength to support everyone who needs it. Terry died a couple months before they finished high school and since then Joyce took very seriously the mother role towards Eleven.

She appreciated that, she will always appreciate it.

Lucas came after he was done with work. He came to the hospital wig running, desperate to find them since he had just find out: he had been in Indianapolis the whole day working with a client who used to live in Hawkins and when he came back to his office, his secretary told him his wife, Max, had been calling him non-stop. When he called back to the station he was informed of the terrible news by Flo.

Hopper had to come back to the station a little after El went to the hospital because they still had a lot of work and even if he didn't want to leave El there, she told him he should get back, that it was okay because he should do it for both of them; so he could find the criminals who escaped. She wanted her father to catch those who hurt Mike and lock them up and... and if the unspeakable happens to him she would take them down and kill them, slowly and painfully.

As they kept waiting Ted came back from the house after changing his blood-stained clothes and taking Holly to a friend's house, he also called Nancy in New York to tell her the dreadful news. Max also went there, Hopper send her because he didn't want El to be alone and between her and Ted they both told Eleven, Karen, Joyce and Lucas exactly what happened. Lucas stayed next to her the whole

time, caressing her back and assuring that everything would be okay.

The robbery was made by a gang of ten criminals from another city that had been planning the felony for a while: some of them infiltrated as painters, fake guards, fake clients and two others criminals have been following the values truck. When they got there all fake guards, infiltrated criminals and the ones in the other truck shot their guns in the air and ordered everyone to lie down. They pushed people to the floor, kicked and forced some of the bank employees and killed anyone who disobeys their orders without second thoughts. Ted explained how in the middle of the robbery one of them pointed his gun to an innocent old man who apparently didn't listen their commands and he, from his office on the top floor, saw with desperate eyes how Mike jumped in between the old man and the bullet, trying to save him; at the same time a couple police men who were on their day off and wearing regular clothes, jumped to reduce the criminals and just then all hell broke loose. Five criminals in the bank were killed, two of them got wounded, the other five escaped; five innocent lives were taken too (two clients, a guard and two bank employees) and even if El felt sorry for all those innocent people and their families, she just couldn't stop thinking about Mike and what happened to him.

Knowing that Mike got shot because he tried to save an old man's life and because of the shooting he fell off the stairs and hit his head against the marble border of the water fountain had been a little too much for her. Lucas held her by the shoulders and she hid her face on his chest feeling all hopes leaving and panic and pain running in her veins as she asked herself over and over *why* didn't she go with him. Mike went there to finish the transaction of the house they would both live in, the house they were both planning on building a life and a family in. Why didn't she go with him?

Why, of all days, did she choose to stay and eat cookies with Karen? If she would have been there, shit, she should have been there! She should have been there and use her powers to protect him.

It's been so long since she doesn't use her powers, it's been so long since she doesn't need to use them; but they were there, they were there and she should have been there to help him.

He has to live, he has to survive.

El needs to hold his hand and tell him how much she loves him, how irreplaceable he is. She needs to tell Mike how sorry she is, that she would never, ever, leave him alone to do something important and as Lucas kept hugging her and Max caressed her back and whispered that it wasn't her fault, Eleven was choking on her own tears and remorse wishing for Mike to get through the surgery.

Please, please let him live through the surgery.

x

The silence in that hallway was crushing her.

Eleven was sitting with one leg up to her chest, resting her cheek on her knee and staring at nothing, her eyes burned from crying.

"Why haven't we heard anything from anyone yet?" asked El, she had been quiet for a long time; her voice was groggy as if she had been sleeping for days or as if she had the weight of the entire world stuck in her throat.

Everyone looked at her; Karen was leaning on her husband's shoulder, Max was leaning against the wall and Lucas was next to her, his hand firm on her back. Joyce was on her other side, holding her hand.

"They can't take much longer, sweetie."

"But how much longer, mom?" she asked without looking at her. "Why hasn't anyone come here to tell us s-something, huh? Not a n-nurse, o-or a doctor had come h-here to... to tell us anyt-thing." she snapped more to herself than to everyone around her. That silence, that tightness was eating her, it was suffocating her into endless crying and letting her fears take all of her because she didn't know what was going on.

How bad was Mike? How injured was he really for them to be in there for so long? She didn't know much about medicine but she did know that having someone under general anaesthesia for a long time was actually quite dangerous. Dustin once mentioned something like

this when he talked about his patients.

"When does Will's flight land?" she asked again, this time she tried to place her mind far from where she knew it couldn't escape, away from the fears haunting her heart.

"He is probably about to land, I guess." mentioned Joyce patting her hand. "I left a note in the fridge for when they get home so I believe they'll see it and come here."

El nodded. "Yeah, I'm sure they will. Not only him but Florian is also Mike's friend and he'll be worried." she said before blowing her nose on a tissue. She gasped again, almost dehydrated from all her crying. "We have to call Dusty..."

"I took care of it." answered Lucas. "I called Mrs. Henderson and she told me as soon as Dustin gets there she'll let him and Jennifer know. I'm sure he'll be here soon. She also told me she's praying for Mike and you can count on her with anything you need."

El felt a bit relieved and nodded. Karen thanked Joyce and Lucas as well for making sure the boys know about everything. They remained silent a couple more minutes until El spoke again when Max gave her a cup of water.

"Thanks." she softly said as she blew her nose once more. El sighed; her head was chaos at the very least and she knew everyone else noticed. Her friends and family knew that too, not only because of her tears but because of the occasional blinking of the hallway's light bulbs. She frowned a lot, her tears coming back with full force, her eyelids so swollen and she shook her head as if saying 'no' to the idea of what happened. "It shouldn't be like this... W-we shouldn't meet again i-in the h-hospital, not like t-this."

"Sweetie, everything will be okay." Joyce said.

El shook her head. "How can you be so sure? I more than a-anyone want that everyt-thing goes well b-but... But his birthday is in four d-days! He wasn't supposed t-to spent his b-birthday oh o-or Christmas in h-here, mom. Mike was so happy now, so calmed now his master degree was over and he had the p-place he always w-wanted. We

were all going to celebrate it and..."

"We will, Jane. We will." interrupted Karen from her seat in front of her. "Even if we have to celebrate Christmas in here we will celebrate because he'll be okay. All he needs now is to get through surgery."

"He will get through it." Lucas said holding her shoulder, she looked back at him. "Mike will be okay, he is a fighter and he won't give up. He never gave anything up so why do you think he'll change now? This is just a little bump in the way but everything will be okay, El. He is our leader, remember?"

El smiled at him. It was no secret that Lucas and Mike always had that leader thing going on, even though it was pretty obvious that it always been her husband the one leading the party even when Lucas never admitted it, it was also true that together they pushed each one in the best way. Every time they set their minds together they came up with the best ideas, the best concerts to go to, the trip to the fun fair in Michigan when they came back from college during Christmas in 1991 or, thinking back in the past, they faced danger together with the rest of the party and always survived because as a team they have always been stronger. Hearing Lucas finally saying out loud that Mike is the leader of the party gave her a warm, nice feeling and at the same time it caused her even more pain; it felt as if Lucas wanted to pay homage to his friend in the way he deserves it. It felt as if he was saying goodbye to Mike.

El moved her hand and cupped Lucas cheek with a tiny smile but then her eyes burned, her faced contracted into a torturous frown and she could barely be held by Lucas's arms as she started crying her heart out. The mage finding comfort in the arms of the ranger while her paladin fought his final battle.

Mike had to survive; he had to because without him, Eleven simply doesn't want to live.

x

After two more hours of feeling the stomach in her chest and her heart on the floor; of seeing doctors passing by but none of them saying a single word, of Hopper coming from the Station to keep

them company and saying they still had no clue of where the criminals have gone while Joyce kept giving Karen support since she is also a mother and she knows what that woman was going through, only then after two more hours the door at the end of that hallway finally opened.

The footsteps of a fifty year old man alerted everyone that a doctor was finally coming to talk to them but Eleven knew he was coming probably before he even opened that door. She knew her powers must have been on edge, making her a bit more sensitive than usual. It wasn't weird because she was extremely upset and unable to identify the different noises and sensations in her body; she felt anxious, broken, desperate and all of that was an understatement.

Max, Lucas, Ted, Karen, her father and Joyce stood up next to her, ready to receive whatever news coming. El realized from the way the doctor looked that what he had to say wasn't good news.

She wanted to throw up.

"Michael Wheeler's family?" asked the man holding a notepad in his hands.

Ted talked in behalf of them all.

"We are his parents and she is his wife." he said loud and clear causing Eleven to look at him rather amazed. She noticed he had never spoken like that before, not at least in her presence; it was different from his usual tired, almost whispering voice. He was another man.

The doctor sighed. "I'm Dr. Marcus Syler; I'm your son's medical surgeon. We received the patient Michael Wheeler with two gunshots, one in his left thigh and the other in his back, close to his right kidney. We have been able to remove the bullet from his leg during the surgery but..."

"Is he okay? Is he alive?" Eleven interrupted.

Dr. Syler looked at her in the eye, his jaw clenched but he wasn't looking at her with anger or exasperation, but despair.

Oh no.

"He is alive, Mrs. Wheeler."

Eleven heard everyone sighing and relaxing at his words but she couldn't. The doctor has his eyes fixed on Eleven's and she knew he wasn't done talking.

"Mrs. Wheeler your husband came with two gunshots but one of them, the one near his kidney, had in and out wounds which tells us the bullet went right through your husband causing some major injuries such as internal bleeding." he explained. "Fortunately, giving the size of the bullet as we've seen in the one we found on his leg, the projectile didn't touch any of his organs which is extremely lucky but he lost plenty of blood, I mean, *a lot.*"

Karen bawled and everyone looked at her; hearing how serious Mike's state really was was harder since they thought he was going to be okay just a second ago. Eleven didn't turn to look at her tho, she knew there was more.

The doctor continued. "Right now he's being prepared for intensive care... He is receiving a blood transfusion and we are keeping an eye on him and how he evolves during the following hours."

She was afraid of asking but she had to. She needs to know.

"That's not it, isn't it?" El wouldn't have recognized her own voice in a crowd. She sounded so broken, so scared.

He shook his head. "We believe it must have been because he lost plenty of blood or because of how he fell, since he was probably unconscious at the moment his body hit the floor and the border of the fountain, but since he was most likely unconscious when he landed he couldn't have hold onto anything, which is why he presents to us with other minor injuries like a broken arm, dislocated knee, and skull fracture as well. In fact it is almost a miracle he hasn't broken his clavicle or his ribs which could have gone through his lungs. This gives me the idea that he was in fact a little conscious at least to put his arm in between the floor to prevent that from happening." he explained, moving his arms as if showing Eleven how

Mike had fallen without being too graphic. "Even so the biggest most serious of his wounds isn't his broken leg or the projectile's injuries but his head. Mr. Wheeler has a head trauma, a big concussion on his skull between the union of his right parietal and frontal area, here." he said touching El's head so she could understand where the injuries were at.

"The fracture is not as big as it is expected from the way he fell since hitting his head against marble can easily kill someone only because of the impact itself, still he is very delicate and we have been trying to lower the pressure on his brain. In time he is stable but we can't guarantee anything yet, not with his brain so compromised. The next 48 hours are crucial to see if the brain swelling goes away and especially if he wakes up. At the moment your husband is alive; he is extremely delicate but he is alive."

He was done explaining what he did with Mike and focused on Karen, Ted and Hopper's questions while Joyce placed her hands on El's shoulders and time stood still. Eleven touched her own head imagining every wound Mike has and suddenly the floor started moving as if it was made out of liquid. Every voice around her sounded distorted, her heart and his mind told her to resist and don't pass out; she has to be strong because he needs her and maybe it was the way she started sweating which alerted Joyce. Her mother dragged her to a garbage bin a couple feet away and Eleven started vomiting everything she had in her stomach.

A part of her knew that this nightmare has just begun.

After the first post-surgery medical report Eleven, even if she did not want to leave the hospital in case something happens while she isn't around, she was forced to get back to the house with Ted to pick up some things. Mike had his ID in his wallet but El had to get back to their luggage and take Mike's health care card and pack some personal items. Karen didn't go with them and that pissed her off actually; she said she wanted to stay there until her son gets settled in his room and they allow her seeing him. That was what pissed El off, it was something for what she wanted to fight Karen about for the first time in her life, forgetting about the great mother-daughter in law relationship they always had but, at the same time, she understood.

She had to understand because when Eleven came back from the house and knew Karen was with Mike and, for the time being she had to wait a couple hours for her own turn, it was Joyce's tender voice that calmed her down. Her step mom had to remind El that Karen was his mother and therefore she must understand and have patience, she shouldn't think of her as a selfish woman because she didn't wait for her to be back; because El must understand that in Karen's mind she only had Mike and nothing more.

El nodded and felt like crying again because she had been trying to get pregnant since Mike got his Masters Degree and even if they haven't succeed yet, she couldn't even imagine what she would feel if her own baby had to go through this. She thought about Karen watching Mike's baby pictures and remembered every anecdote she ever told her; how the woman smiled at every memory and felt so emotional and proud as she talked about him, how happy she was when he graduated from school, college and when Mike and El got married. Thinking about all helped her understand the woman a lot better because that was the woman who gave him life, who brought him into this world.

Karen is the one who felt Mike's heartbeat before she even knew he was a boy. The one who felt him moving inside of her as he grew every day a little more. His mother; the one who loved him before even knowing how he looked like, the one who dreamed about him every night about the day when he'd be in her arms.

Who else if not her could love Mike as much as El does? Those are different kinds of love but both equally strong, endless. Eleven cannot live without Mike and Karen was the one who gave him life and now such life would possibly come to an end.

No, El couldn't hate her or be mad at her and when her mother in law left Mike's room Eleven went and gave her a big, tight hug so she would know they would support each other because they were together in this. They would present battle together, hand in hand, heart to heart to bring him back.

xx

She never thought about it, just reached her hand out and used her powers

to open the door, visualizing the keychain slide on the other side until it fell loose and then, she stepped in. She was serious; her face hard and her nose bleeding, ready to do anything in order to help them after saving them from those creatures surrounding the house.

They were all staring at her and she was in shock after the massacre of those demo dogs; she felt numb, like a robot not even caring about the pain that using her powers causes her. Maybe it was like Kali said, getting her maximum powers from the anger bubbling inside and the anger she felt by seeing her friends in danger was big, so big.

She felt cold, frozen in anger and fear, barely conscious of who was who with that entire crowd in front of her but then, when a thin figure moved in between that group of people and stood in front of her, she had eyes for no one else.

That person, his mere existence made her world so tiny erasing every single human in the planet so it could only be them and no one else. Eleven felt like waking up after a long, endless nightmare when their eyes locked and those beautiful chocolate eyes filled with tears. He was so surprised, mouth hanging open and heart pounding on his chest like a hammer.

It hit her hard and yet it felt like a caress, like an explosion of tingles coming from her stomach and crawling up to her chest until it reach the tip of her fingers and ever hair in her head. It was Mike looking at her as if she was a dream came true, just like she was looking at him.

Eleven felt warm again; the same warmth she knew so well erasing the coldness and loneliness and life became good again because his eyes are so pure and eternal that it erased every mistake she made in the city and she knew she did well by coming back to Hawkins. There were no monsters, no Brenner in her mind or in real life, there was no Kali, and there was no fear; all she could see was a year of yearning, burning love finally becoming true: the boy for whom she breathes and dreams in the cabin after visiting him in the void. She drove Hopper crazy every day talking about him, talking about how wonderful Mike is and how she missed him so desperately.

Was he really there? Yes, he was. She wasn't standing in the void looking at him calling for her under the fort. It wasn't day twenty one, nor it

wasn't day two hundred and five or two hundred and twenty six; it wasn't 'soon'. It was now. She was finally there, he was standing right there. Her heart was hammering in her chest and her breathing became erratic, the floor waving as an ocean of feathers and Mike's smile illuminated her path from here to eternity and beyond; it was the path to his arms and she went for it hugging him like a life saviour who pulled her up from a year of drowning pain and Eleven could finally breathe again.

She came back to his warmth, she came back to him.

She came back home.

x

A sob stuck in her throat when she went through that white door and stepped into that sterile, cold intensive care room; she could see him again as if she hadn't seen her husband for years.

For some reason her mind had travelled momentarily to that faithful night of November in 1984 when she saved their lives, only this time every step she gave didn't take her to Mike's arms and the tears in her eyes weren't joyful.

Mike wasn't standing in front of her, smiling in between relief and immeasurable happiness because they were together again. He wasn't looking at her as if he cried for her for almost a year as their fears became something from the past and warmth and love gave every beat of their hearts a new meaning; this time he wasn't reaching for her and holding her tight but he was lying on a hospital bed surrounded by machines and covered to his chest with clean bed sheets on top of his hospital robes.

"..." she couldn't speak. Eleven took both her hands up to her mouth to stifle the loud whimper trying to escape from her broken heart. She wanted to scream because that's just a nightmare and at the same time it isn't, because it is real. The silence of the room barely cut by the 'bip' from the heart-rhythm control machine showing with a green steady pulse that he was alive.

She sat next to him carefully, afraid that every movement she'd made can cause him distress. She could feel how fragile he was, she could

almost see his life hanging from a thin wire when he was always the one who took care of her more than he did with himself. Eleven had tears running down her cheeks, her heart in her throat and she took Mike's hand that didn't have a cast.

She felt him.

"..." El opened her mouth again but words wouldn't come out, only tears. The *bip* in the room got her nervous, edgy but it also reminded her that he was there, that he wasn't dead and her tears fell heavier than before as a mixture of pain and joy: joy because he was alive and pain because she didn't know for how long.

At least he was unconscious and wasn't in pain. She remembered what the doctor said; the broken arm, dislocated knee, skull fracture. She remembered all of that as she looked down at the man who, only that very morning, made love to her and held her every day; now that wonderful, passionate man looked so fragile as he sleeps unaware of the casts and bandages in his arm, leg, torso and head or the mask in his face helping him breathe. His hand in hers but he wasn't locking fingers with Eleven; it was as motionless as he was, his eyes closed and his long eyelashes from his right eye caressing his bruised, swollen cheekbone.

Suddenly hate washed over as she thought about those criminals who did this interrupting the new begging of their life by putting him in that state. She also thought about the bullets those bastards put in his body and she hated that the police couldn't find them yet. She felt her blood boiling; she hoped they'd find them alive and, if something happens to Mike, if he dies then Eleven would make them pay for it. She hasn't been using her powers since so long but she has them and if she loses her husband then those criminals would witness that no hell would hold as much rage as the one she'd unleash upon them.

But now she didn't want to think about that, she couldn't afford herself and her mind to travel around hate and revenge while Mike is resting beside her. He must be surrounded by love and positive energy where he can absorb the strength to heal and get well and Eleven was going to give him what he deserves.

"I l-love you..." she whispered; her voice broken, her eyes pouring.

She wouldn't take her eyes off of him, she wouldn't leave. Her hand had Mike's cold one and she wanted to caress those soft locks of hair but the bandage in it made it impossible. She settled for his shoulder, caressing him just a bit because the doctor and a nurse warned her that he shouldn't be bothered and she should be extra careful for at least the first couple of hours since the surgery.

But that didn't mean she couldn't speak and maybe if she did, he'd find his way home.

"Mike... Mike, can you hear me?" El asked, her voice thin since she thought he probably couldn't. "Honey I'm here, I'm with you. Y-your parents are outside, so it's Joyce, Lucas and Max. H-Hopper is looking for those who d-did this t-to y-you..." she had to stop because it hurts too much, because the fear it too great.

She frowned again as she looked down at his injuries and how he remained asleep. She imagined the way he fell, the wounds now covered and she tried to picture the look on his face as he received those gunshots before he met the marbled floor. She thought about what happened again and how she wasn't there.

Guilt was eating her alive. Why wasn't she there?

El begun sobbing uncontrollably because she couldn't hold back anymore; because he shouldn't be like this, because that wasn't the holiday they planned, because their lives couldn't end like this.

"You're gonna get t-through this, my love." Eleven spoke so softly; she was shaking, hardly breathing. "We are gonna g-get th-through this and... and don't w-worry okay? All you n-need to do is heal and I'll b-be right here holding your hand, keeping you w-warm." she was sobbing, it was heartbreaking. "Mike please... I'm here, I'm h-here honey and I n-need you to fight, okay? I need y-you to heal and l-live and... Oh Mike please, p-please just come b-back to me baby please!"

Her little speech was one out promises, desperation and a grief she didn't wanted to experience. It was Eleven crying her soul out as she touched Mike's hand with her cheek to kiss it and keep it warm, reminding him that she was there and he wasn't alone.

The next 48 hs are the most important hours of their lives and the only ones holding any hope because that's what the doctor told them. If Mike doesn't wake up during that time, if anything comes up and he gets worse or if he doesn't get better then after that time, every minute would detract any possible hope that he'd ever wake up. The cerebral oedema must cease, his heart must resist.

But she would fight next to him, she wouldn't leave.

She didn't care about the orange couch, she didn't care about his birthday party, and she didn't care about the house anymore or anything else that wasn't the young man, the wonderful boy with whom she married.

All she ever wanted was that in the next hours Mike would open his eyes so she could breathe again.

All Eleven wanted was for him to survive, to get through this.

Oh God, please, please let him live.

oOoOoOoOoOo

Hi again, I hope you guys don't hate me much after this chapter. If you think this was painful then you have no idea what's coming.

Anyway, I'm sorry to keep you guys waiting so long, many things are going on: one of them is that my baby is turning one year old on Saturday and planning a party is so emotional for us. I hope with my heart that I can count on your reviews to know you are still here and that the time it takes me to write and translate so you guys can read too, is time well spent. So please, pleaaaase, leave a big REVIEW.

This takes me a lot to write and a review only takes a minute and it means the world to all authors.

Oh I sometimes write or publish stuff on my instagram account celestogenesis. If you don't mind to help me grow and reach more fans, please share.

Until next chapter!